



**RUHAMA**  
Supporting Women Affected by Prostitution

# **RUHAMA**

## **Annual Report 2012**



[www.Ruhama.ie](http://www.Ruhama.ie)

Pathways through prostitution: Marianna's Story	2
Welcome by Valerie Judge, Chairperson of Ruhama	3
Foreword by Sarah Benson, Chief Executive Officer of Ruhama	4
About Ruhama	6
Operating Context	7
Services 2012	11
<i>Headline Statistics</i>	11
<i>What Ruhama do: Direct Services</i>	11
1. <i>Initial support and Street Outreach</i>	12
2. <i>Casework</i>	13
3. <i>Education, Development and seeking work</i>	14
4. <i>Resettlement support (Housing and Social Welfare)</i>	16
5. <i>Health care</i>	17
6. <i>Interagency work</i>	17
7. <i>Pathways away from service provision: moving on</i>	18
<i>Statistics</i>	19
Advocacy, Campaigning and Awareness Raising	23
Volunteers	29
Financial Summary	30

# Pathways through prostitution: Marianna's Story\*

I travelled to Ireland from Eastern Europe. My life back home was not very happy, my father was violent and abused me. My older sister was in prostitution and I was being pushed in this direction by my father. A family member organised my travel to Ireland to escape and I travelled alone. Because I was 16 when I arrived in Ireland I was taken into the care of the State. When I was only a short time in Ireland I met Simon who seemed lovely, I felt he offered me love and support. As time went on he became abusive towards me. One day he brought home a friend and told me to sleep with him. At the time I didn't realise it wasn't normal for your boyfriend to make you sleep with other men. I just couldn't see that he was being abusive – I thought this was just the way relationships were.

I turned 18 and left care and went to live with my boyfriend. I had never really thought about doing anything else at the time, again it just seemed that moving in with him was what I was supposed to do. When I lived with him he was even more controlling. He would lock me into the house and he would go out and he wouldn't allow me eat because he said it made me fat. He brought men to the house that would pay him to sleep with me and I couldn't refuse, no matter what the man looked like. During this time I was violently raped and beaten and I believe it was then that I began to develop serious health problems. Most of all, I remember the isolation and fear at this time. My life was turned upside down, but this did not happen suddenly, more over a number of years until even I had no idea who I really was. I knew I had to escape.

After a number of failed attempts, I eventually got away from him. But this was only the beginning for me because I had no means of support. I had no social welfare supports, no qualifications and had no work experience to speak of. I had been in prostitution for many years and it was the only thing I knew how to do. So, I stayed in prostitution as it was the only way I knew how to survive.

I should have felt some kind of relief because at least at that time when I slept with men I would get the money – it should have felt like I was more in control but it didn't. I was so unhappy, I was mentally in a very bad state and I knew something had to change.

My turning point came when I heard about Ruhama. I was listening to the radio and I heard an interview about prostitution. At the end of the interview they gave out a phone number for Ruhama and I wrote it down. I didn't ring the number for another six weeks, but eventually picked up the phone.

I took the help offered. I went into intensive casework and slowly worked on a plan that would help me exit prostitution eventually. I realised early on it would not be easy and it certainly wouldn't be a quick journey but for me it felt like I had to do it, for my own sanity. It was a long journey but one that was worth taking.

Throughout this time I was still in prostitution to bridge the gap financially. I found it hard to believe that I would ever be good enough to be able to do a 'normal' job. Looking back now the most important thing for me was the encouragement and consistent support that was provided by Ruhama while I went through this very tough and uncertain time. I think without it, I would never have had the courage or the strength to continue fighting for my basic rights.

There were days I felt so low, particularly after sitting at a social welfare hatch and having to explain to an inspector how I had been surviving financially up until that point. Sometimes I felt like screaming across the Perspex window, but somehow my caseworker would always know what I was thinking and she would interject and alleviate the tension. After several meetings with social welfare I knew I had no alternative but to reveal that I had been in prostitution. The only way I could have done that, was with my caseworker at my side. I just felt that having her with me meant that there was someone present who was not going to judge, who understood me but more importantly who didn't put conditions on me and would ensure others did not either.

Getting social welfare was such an important support because without some financial assistance I would not be able to make the changes I needed to make.

I have now left prostitution. Within prostitution I was continuing to suffer but I could only see this properly once I had the proper supports in place and could take a step back from it. I am in full time education and have a part-time job now. I feel a huge sense of pride when I think about how far I have come. Of course I don't live in a fool's paradise and I will sometimes be brought back down to earth with a bang, like on occasion when I have bumped into a former client in a shopping centre. But those days are getting fewer and farer between and for the most part my days are happy. I am just so grateful to be leading a normal life and I am determined to make it a good life.

Today I am in Ruhama for my last meeting with my caseworker and we are closing my case. The best thing I will take from my relationship with Ruhama is the knowledge that while they were there to support me, I had the capacity within myself for change – they just helped me find it.

\*Marianna's story is a composite testimony based on actual disclosures to protect confidentiality.

# Chairperson's Welcome

Ruhama provides a unique service in Ireland. Ruhama supports and helps women who have been prostituted, or trafficked for sexual exploitation, for commercial profit.

For the woman who is marginalised and often rendered invisible, Ruhama represents a safe place where her life in prostitution does not need to be hidden, where she will not be judged, where she will be given support to make choices, and where the deep complexity of her personal experience is understood.

Ruhama helps women in prostitution who wish to leave. There is no other service to assist women in this country in the often complex process of exiting prostitution, despite the reality that over 90% of those in prostitution wish to leave, but believe themselves to be trapped and without options.

In this report we read many statistics, and behind each one is an individual woman's story, a personal experience, where she has been trafficked, coerced or otherwise socialised into a life which she now wishes to leave, but where her escape may be threatened by danger, fear and absence of options.

When she seeks help from Ruhama, the woman is helped to regain her life, and to have choices that most people in society expect as a matter of course for ourselves, and for the women in our lives – our sisters, daughters, nieces, cousins, friends.

For over two decades Ruhama has been helping women who find themselves trapped in the sex trade. Some of the women Ruhama now helps were not even born, or were infants or children, when the service began. Many have simply never had the chances or choices that society assumes are there for everyone.

Ruhama also works to ensure that girls born today will not be trafficked or prostituted, and that there will not be a need for this service in the future.

Therefore, as well as providing services to women, who now wish to change their lives, Ruhama's strategic work focuses on the development of public understanding about the harm and damage caused to women and girls, who are prostituted by others, and who may believe that a life in prostitution is the only or best choice they have.

Ruhama advocates for the reflection, in legislation, of societal compassion towards those who are now, or who may be in the future, trapped in this life. Ruhama supports the development of statutory provision which will remove the market for, and profitability of, prostitution of a woman.

Providing support services cannot be sustained without the continued help from statutory funds and charitable donations. Facing continually increasing need, Ruhama has at the same time suffered significant cuts to its statutory funding. In the current challenging economic times, we thank our funders and donors for their recognition of the value of our work. It will be critical to the continuity of the service that funding is sustained in coming years, in line with other voluntary service providers who partner statutory provision. Although times are hard, it is in hard times that organisations such as Ruhama, who focus on frontline service delivery and social justice, are most required.

I wish to convey my sincere thanks to each member of the Ruhama team, led by CEO Sarah Benson, including, in particular, the growing number of volunteers who are carrying out exceptional work. I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Board of Directors for their support and significant contribution and commitment during the year.

## Valerie Judge

Chairperson,  
Board of Directors



# Foreword by Sarah Benson Chief Executive Officer of Ruhama

It has been another challenging and busy year for Ruhama as we endeavour to meet the broad and often complex needs of women affected by prostitution, including sex trafficking, in Ireland.

The commercial sex trade in this country remains very active and highly organised. There are numerous criminal gangs organizing and profiting from the prostitution of vulnerable women and girls right across the island of Ireland in urban and rural settings. While Ruhama continue to work with significant numbers of Irish women, the majority of those exploited in the indoor sex trade are migrant women and this is reflected by the fact that in 2012 Ruhama supported women of thirty two (32) different nationalities. This small island remains a destination for traffickers, pimps and procurers from all corners of the globe. For the women and girls – far from home, isolated and often highly controlled or literally coerced through trafficking, prostitution itself is an intrinsically dangerous and damaging experience.

The experiences women reported to Ruhama in 2012 sadly echo those reported by women every year for the last two decades of Ruhama's existence as a frontline service. They attest to the fundamental harm to, and the devastating consequences for the mental and physical wellbeing of the women involved in the commercial sex trade. No parent thinks of prostitution as a viable positive choice for their child and yet these women and girls are bought and sold for the sexual satisfaction of a minority of Irish men in every corner of Ireland. It is highly important that we as a society take responsibility for the exploitation that happens on our own doorsteps.

Ruhama offers a holistic and non-judgemental service that responds to women's needs ranging from practical educational, career planning to crisis situations, immigration, health, family, housing and legal issues. Women affected by prostitution engage with Ruhama for a broad variety of supports and services: some big and complex, some small and simpler. In the course of working collaboratively we share not only the serious challenges faced but also their hopes, dreams, plans and successes.

We continue to operate an extremely challenging funding climate. Despite having to reduce our capacity in terms of casework hours due to funding cuts, Ruhama nonetheless responded to a record 258 women in 2012. The in depth advocacy and support service offered through Casework and Development resulted in 908 face to face contacts with 170 women, over 13,000 telephone calls and more than 5,200 text supports. In addition Ruhama's outreach van which engages with women in street prostitution went out on 108 occasions for over 413 hours and engaged with 62 women exclusively on the streets. In addition there were 26 women whom we supported to access other appropriate follow on services, or who chose not to engage with casework.


A particular challenge is to overcome what are often systemic issues that are beyond the powers of one organization to change, therefore; a key pillar of Ruhama's work continues to be our awareness raising, policy and advocacy work. Taking direction from the challenges women present with at the frontline, Ruhama advocates on a number of fronts to try to improve Ireland's response to those exploited in the commercial sex trade and raise public awareness of the challenges women face, both in & when trying to exit the trade. Ruhama made submissions and representation throughout 2012 on broad ranging issues including; immigration policy, social welfare provisions, and criminal justice. One aspect of our policy work is truly a collaborative effort in the successful Turn Off the Red Light Campaign, comprising of 68 organisations, which Ruhama is a core member of. In response to the campaign in 2012 the very positive step was taken by the Department of Justice and Equality to review Ireland's prostitution legislation. Ruhama participated fully in this process, advocating for a number of changes to the law to improve the facility to target organized crime and also to tackle the source of demand: the sex buyer, rather than the criminalizing of those in prostitution. Ruhama firmly believes that no person should be criminalized for their own exploitation.

This exceptional output in such tough times was made possible because of the great solidarity with the work from the staff team for which I am extremely grateful. As the economic climate worsens and we see demand for support increase, it becomes a highly critical time with the services hanging in the balance. Ruhama is exceptionally thankful for the generosity of its supporters and donors without whom we could not survive. The relationship with our statutory funders is very important to us and we hope that they will continue to recognize and value Ruhama's frontline work.

Collaborative working has always been a key component of Ruhama's work both at the frontline and in our advocacy work. This is especially important given the highly diverse and complex needs that women affected by prostitution including sex trafficking, present







with. Positive working relationships with Gardai, HSE services, housing, legal and migrant support agencies, charities, addiction services - and many others (both in Ireland and overseas) make it possible for Ruhama to offer creative advocacy and support to women using our services. I would like to express our thanks to all and look forward to continuing partnership at a time when collective, joined up responses are more important than ever to try to prevent highly vulnerable women and girls from slipping through the cracks in our social system.

Internally we have a highly motivated and dedicated staff and volunteer team, including the voluntary Board of Directors. I would like to express my own personal thanks to each and every person for their time, energy, expertise and enthusiasm which sustains the work of the organisation. Also we are as an organisation very grateful to those who assist our work through expertise in IT, communications and other individual acts of support and kindness.

However my final word goes to those extraordinary women with whom we engaged in 2012. Despite some of the terrible hardships and adversity there are also tales of amazing tenacity, bravery and creativity from women whom it is a privilege to know.

**Sarah Benson**

CEO

# About Ruhama

Ruhama is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and a registered charity founded in 1989 which works on a nationwide basis with women affected by prostitution. Ruhama offers support and assistance to women:

- who are currently active in prostitution (indoor and on-street)
- who have a history of prostitution
- who are victims of sex trafficking.

Ruhama regards prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation as forms of violence against women and violations of women's human rights. We see prostitution and the social and cultural attitudes which sustain it as being deeply rooted in gender inequality and social marginalisation.

Grounded in a perspective which emphasises the value and dignity of every human being, Ruhama works from a position of respect and uncritical acceptance of women and seeks to actualise belief in their inner capacity to effect positive change in their own lives.

The **guiding principles** which inform Ruhama's work are:

- Provision of a non-judgmental service
- Placing a high value on equality, inclusivity, cultural diversity, dignity and respect
- Affirmation of every woman's right to society's protection and respect
- Commitment to learning and to continual service improvement
- Accountability to funders and to the women we work with.

Ruhama's **vision** is of a more just society, in which prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation do not exist.

The organisation's **mission** is to:

- Reach out to and provide support services to women affected by prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation
- Based on individual need, to offer assistance and opportunities to explore alternatives to prostitution
- Work to change public attitudes, practices and policies which allow the exploitation of women through trafficking and prostitution.

Ruhama's activities fall into two distinct but complimentary categories:

## 1. Service Delivery to women affected by Prostitution

## 2. Advocacy, Awareness Raising and Campaigning

This report highlights the outputs and activities of Ruhama's work in 2012, with a reflection on both the context and challenges of the environmental context we operate in, and the efforts made by the organisation to provide a holistic model of care for service users against this backdrop.

Directors:

**Chairperson:** Ms. Valerie Judge

**Company Secretary:** Mr. Peter O'Neill

Sr. Bernadette McNally, R.G.S.

Ms. Catherine Joyce

Ms. Catherine Nolan

Mr. John O'Reilly

Dr. Mary Scully

Sr. Sheila Murphy, O.L.C.

Mr. Colm O'Dwyer

Sr. Frances Robinson, O.L.C

Ms. Zuilmah Wallis

## The organisation of the sex trade & sex trafficking in Ireland:

The sex trade is thriving in Ireland and is not just confined to the major towns and cities. Modern technology such as the internet and use of mobile phones has facilitated this expansion through easier communication globally and locally, enabling all involved in the trade to operate with greater anonymity and invisibility. This increased ability to operate under cover greatly advantages the pimps and controllers of the sex trade allowing them to operate behind the scenes with near impunity. It also reduces the risk of exposure for users, while rendering the women in prostitution, including victims of trafficking, more invisible and inaccessible.

The focus of the sex trade is primarily indoors with fewer women in street-based prostitution. Prostitution is predominantly operating out of apartment blocks and houses spread throughout the country. Additionally there are 'massage services' operating which are part of the sex trade also. The bulk of the prostitution in Ireland is connected with organised criminality. It is also an international trade with criminal gangs of numerous nationalities operating in the country. The women, particularly those controlled by pimps and traffickers, are often cut off from all contacts, outside of the users and pimps, making access to services very difficult. The woman may not know what services are available and there are limited outreach routes for services targeting women affected by prostitution.

## Profile of women accessing services and experiences within prostitution.

Since Ruhama was established over two decades ago, the profile of women involved in the sex trade has changed and this has impacted on our ability to reach them. In the past, most women affected by prostitution were Irish and in street-based prostitution. It was reasonably easy to make contact with them. There still is a cohort of women who are in street prostitution and Ruhama continues to deliver an outreach service to these women and girls.

One of the most prevalent issues faced by women in on-street prostitution is threat, or actual experience of violence. Women have reported experiences of:

- Assault: physical and sexual, including rape
- Conflict with other women
- Buyers bringing them to remote areas and threatening them, robbing them or refusing to pay them.
- Abuse from members of the public: verbal abuse; items being thrown at them.

Nowadays, most women are situated indoors (with the majority under the control of a pimp) and are foreign. Research commissioned by the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) "Globalisation, Sex Trafficking and Prostitution" concluded that 'there is a minimum of 1,000 women in indoor prostitution in Ireland at any one time', and that "between 3% and 13% (of these) are Irish women, which means that up to 97% are migrant women".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Globalisation, Sex Trafficking and Prostitution: The experience of migrant women in Ireland  
– The Immigrant Council of Ireland in collaboration with the Women's Health Project (HSE) and Ruhama



## Operating context - Continued

The women in street-based prostitution are commonly drug users living extremely chaotic lives. Women in the indoor sector tend to be more controlled and more restricted in their movements and usually highly dependent on their pimps or traffickers, having little or no knowledge of the country and with no social or support networks and often no English language skills. While there are a small number of women in indoor prostitution who are not directly connected with pimps and traffickers, these number the minority. It is important to note that every person in prostitution, whether trafficked, pimped or otherwise, is nonetheless vulnerable to the fundamental dangers and negative health consequences that are intrinsic to being in prostitution.

There is a commonly expressed view that being in street prostitution is more dangerous than indoor prostitution, however, this is not necessarily the reality. The experience for women in indoor prostitution is no less dangerous and also has added complications that women have to cope with, and which have significant consequences for both physical and emotional wellbeing.

- *Women discuss feeling a constant state of tension due to the risk of something 'going wrong'. This can be a buyer pushing for sex acts that she does not want to perform or a direct attack and assault. Another contributor to the stress and tension, particularly for Irish women, is the possibility that a person they know, even a male family member, might be on the other side of the door as a buyer.*
- *Women have been raped, robbed and physically assaulted. Even in cases where there was more than one woman/person in a premises, attacks happening behind closed bedroom doors could not be heard and so no assistance was given.*
- *A large number of organised gangs, of different nationalities, effectively control the indoor sex trade. These are dangerous individuals, and women (particularly vulnerable migrant women who are effectively isolated and without supports in Ireland) are very fearful of reporting abuses perpetrated on them by pimps to Gardaí.*
- *In some cases, women reported having problems with organised criminals either attempting to drive them away from a particular area where they are operating, or trying to coerce them into being pimped by them.*
- *Men pay for sex generally for between a half hour up to several hours, which requires women to put on a persona of someone who finds each buyer interesting, attractive and agreeable no matter what they are like. It also requires women to take on a persona of their own as the 'escort' the man expects her to be. Women rarely, if ever, reveal the truth about themselves to buyers (name, age, life circumstances). This can result in what is known as 'splitting' and can have significant negative consequences for mental and emotional health.*
- *Women in on-street prostitution talk about being able to keep their clothes on and have relatively quick engagements with buyers. They rarely kiss men and usually only engage in 'straight' sex acts. For women indoors they have to entertain buyers for longer periods of time and in a far more exposed manner, fulfilling demands for almost any sex act, often very rough.*
- *While it is not credible to hold women who may be assaulted responsible for the actions of perpetrators by suggesting that they can somehow 'detect' when a man will be violent, there are nonetheless some techniques that women can use to make a very basic 'risk assessment' of a buyer. If he appears under the influence of drugs/alcohol or if he seems particularly agitated, aggressive or even too quiet, this can make a woman more vigilant. Women on-street talk about being able to lean into cars and smell the breath of a man to see if he is intoxicated or see if there is anything on the car seats that could pose a threat. They also note their belief that it is easier to call attention in a street or to try to get out of a car than a locked room. For women indoors, particularly those who are pimped and have no opportunity to even speak to buyers for more than a moment before they arrive to have sex with them, there is no meaningful way to assess if someone is a potential threat.*
- *Victims of Trafficking are predominantly exploited within the confines of the indoor sex trade.*

In prostitution is not the only place these women are vulnerable to violence; many reported domestic violence and some spoke of physical and sexual assault in their own communities by men or groups of men. Some women also spoke of their experiences of sexual abuse as children.

**Note:** While the majority of those in prostitution are women and girls there are also a small number of men and a significant minority of transgender persons. Ruhama offers support services to any person identifying as having a female gender. While our comprehensive services don't extend to men we will always attend to any persons presenting needs and endeavour to identify appropriate support services for them.

## Sex Trafficking & Organised Prostitution.

Ruhama's direct experience, as affirmed by our contacts with other State & frontline services in Ireland, across Europe and beyond, is that sex trafficking and organised prostitution are inextricably connected. Victims of sex trafficking are deeply entrenched in the commercial sex trade and, increasingly, it is the case that distinguishing between the experience of a woman who is highly controlled in organized prostitution and a woman who fits the narrow definition of 'trafficked' can be a challenge. This is in many cases because of the adapting tactics of traffickers themselves who seek to minimize the 'indicators' that their victims may demonstrate (e.g. women being allowed to keep their papers, or given some money rather than none). In some cases 'pimp' and 'trafficker' may be the same whereby there are some women in their brothels who fit the definition of trafficked and others who do not.

In recent years much work has been done to try to increase contacts with women in the indoor sex trade, while also maintaining the important outreach to women in on-street prostitution. Ruhama's continuing development of outreach and targeted awareness raising work to enhance contacts with women is a key component of the organisation's strategic work for the future.

## The Irish Immigration System.

A significant factor in supporting women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking in Ireland is the immigration system. The status of a woman and whether she fulfils the Habitual Residency Condition (HRC) have a critical influence on the degree of options available to her and supports that Ruhama may try to bring to bear. This is a barrier that influences our potential to offer support to women trying to exit prostitution and also victims of trafficking who are trying to recover and move on with their lives.

Government policy in relation to the accommodating of victims of trafficking/vulnerable women in prostitution within the Direct Provision system, with all of the restrictions which this brings, are of ongoing concern to Ruhama. In particular, the 'dispersal policy' of the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) presents challenges. Ruhama experiences clients being moved at short notice far from Dublin where they may have been engaging in numerous supports that cannot be replicated in their new location, thus restricting the level of important and coherent supports that can be offered to them.

During 2012, a number of women who are on a Stamp 2 student immigration visa presented to Ruhama requesting support to exit prostitution and find viable alternatives in terms of income. The majority are from non-EEA countries.

These women generally fall into two categories:

- A) Those who have come to Ireland to learn English and hoped to work part-time to support themselves while studying here but found that they could not get formal employment so became involved in prostitution but are not happy and wish to exit as soon as possible.
- B) Those who came into the country to become involved in prostitution and learn English, registered with a language school as a student but find that they cannot study (as they must be available for prostitution). They can end up living in Ireland for years without being able to speak any English and find that their options to exit prostitution and stay in Ireland are very limited and become more constrained the longer they are in the sex trade. They are commonly under the control of a third party who may facilitate their journey to Ireland and they may be dependent on them for accommodation (i.e. they live in the brothel) and are very vulnerable at the point of seeking to exit.

These cases can be very difficult to support as Ruhama is presented with women desperate to get out of prostitution but they have heavy restrictions attached to the student visa (Stamp 2). For our part Ruhama can offer creative opportunities to learn English, deliver career guidance and support for CV development and interview skills. But with the restriction on permitted work hours and no opportunity to access even an emergency welfare payment, there is a need to recognise the vulnerability of such women, who are often under the control of a pimp, and to consider a statutory response that would give greater access to the work market and or social welfare system for women acknowledged to be trying to exit prostitution and victims of trafficking from non-EEA countries who are on a Stamp 2 permit.

Ruhama advocates for a compassionate humanitarian response to migrant women in prostitution overall by the statutory authorities. There has been some very positive progress in 2012, including for example; excellent collaboration with an Garda Síochána in delivering training to frontline Gardai, and advocacy on behalf of individual women in some cases. Ruhama also advocates through established forums designed to address the needs of trafficked women and highlights the shortcomings in the current formal identification system for victims of trafficking in particular. Positive engagement and spaces created to pursue these issues with statutory stakeholders are very welcome, however much remains to be done to address the needs of this vulnerable group as a matter of statutory policy, with a consistent systemic response throughout the criminal justice and the immigration system needed to minimise risks to vulnerable people in prostitution, including those trafficked.

## Operating context - Continued

**Socio Economic Environment** We continue to endure a lengthy recessionary period and observe the impact it is having on the sex trade in Ireland. The number of women in prostitution appears to be sustained at a high level. It is important to note that there are recessions also occurring in other jurisdictions whereby Ireland may still be seen as a lucrative market for the sale of sex compared to other countries both in and beyond Europe. It is not unreasonable to suggest that greater poverty and desperation in poorer countries makes even more young women vulnerable to the predations of human traffickers or pimps & procurers, as they seek out a better life. The recession has also had a notable negative impact on Ruhama as an organization, with significant cuts from statutory funders having been sustained in the last three years in particular. The organisation has had to take significant cost saving measures during this period which have impacted negatively on available resources. It is also a challenging fundraising environment. Ruhama strive to maintain an excellent service delivery to our clients in a sustainable fashion but for the coming years this will prove even more difficult if cuts persist.

*"I suppose that I got to know how it affects you [being in prostitution] when you run into little things....a lot of women exit prostitution but don't survive it... it's organisations like this and the education that make the difference."*<sup>2</sup>

*"They were really there for me as I had no one, I was alone, the emotional support was very important. I had been so scared. When I first met my caseworker, after that I saw her nearly every day."*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Independent review of Ruhama's services by Dr. Jane Pillinger, Interviewee No 5

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, No 8

## Headline Statistics 2012

<b>Support to 258 Women</b>
<b>170 women in Casework</b>
<b>71 Victims of Sex Trafficking</b>
<b>32 Different Nationalities</b>
<b>908 Face to Face contacts</b>
<b>13,711 Verbal Telephone *</b>
<b>5,226 SMS Supports*</b>
<b>241 Accompaniments</b>
<b>108 nights/413 hours Street Outreach to 72 women.</b>
<b>Education &amp; Development support to 88 Women</b>
<b>Resettlement support to 33 Women</b>

\*phone contacts to and on behalf of women

## What Ruhama do: Direct Services

The provision of direct support services to women affected by prostitution, including sex trafficking, is Ruhama's primary focus. Our services are multi-disciplinary, tailored to individual needs and they are free of charge to women with this experience. While our ultimate goal is to assist and support women to exit prostitution/recover from the experience of sex trafficking, as appropriate, we recognise that the journey out of prostitution is a process and can only be undertaken with the woman's full consent and active collaboration. At all times the provision of our services are non-judgemental and respects the dignity of each person.

A continuum of support is offered ranging from outreach and crisis intervention to person-centred case work, development programmes and resettlement assistance.

Practical concerns including housing, accessing benefits, health and welfare issues, education and immigration status, are addressed according to individual needs.

Recognising that for many women, exiting prostitution is not a once off event but can take months or years. Long term support services are offered to women to help them take the first steps out of prostitution/ towards recovery from sex trafficking, but also to ensure they do not find themselves vulnerable and at risk of re-entry/re-trafficking.

### Ruhama's direct services to women include:

- Individual casework support and advocacy
- Out of hours emergency response
- In emergency situations, provide crisis accommodation to vulnerable women
- Provision of one to one and group training and development opportunities
- Support into mainstream training and/or employment
- Resettlement (Support finding housing, including assistance with social welfare, budgeting and tenancy agreements)
- Mobile Street Outreach in Dublin's "Red Light" areas
- Outreach service to Dochas Centre (Women's Prison)
- Outreach service to HSE Women's Health Service sexual health clinic
- Emotional and psychological support including access to counselling
- Practical support (material needs) in certain circumstances
- Interpretative support
- Referral to other key agencies that can offer supports

# Services 2012 - Continued

Ruhama's frontline services to women are highlighted in this section of the report and include the following areas:

1. Initial Support & Outreach,
2. Casework,
3. Education and Development,
4. Resettlement.
5. Health Care
6. Interagency work
7. Pathways away from service provision: moving on.

In 2012, Ruhama supported a total of **258 women**, **72** were supported in Street Outreach and **170** women were supported in **Casework**. (*10 women were supported in both Casework and Outreach*). A further **26 women** received support from Ruhama but didn't engage in Casework support.

	Street Outreach Service	Casework	Less number in both Street Outreach & Casework	Received support but didn't engage with Casework	Total Number of individual women in 2012
No. Of Women	<b>72</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>258</b>

## 1. Initial support and Street Outreach

Occasionally women engage with the services and are offered an assessment which may indicate that their needs are better met by another service/s or they receive sufficient support through a short term, non-intensive assistance to meet their presenting needs. There were **26** such women in 2012, who are not counted in the casework figures.

### Street outreach

While the majority of the women accessing Ruhama's services are involved in the indoor sex trade, there is nonetheless a cohort who are exclusively in street prostitution, to whom Ruhama offers outreach support.

Ruhama carried out Street Outreach on 108 nights (413 hours) in Dublin. The Ruhama team comprising of 30 outreach workers, both volunteers and staff, met with 72 women, who were commonly supported on multiple occasions throughout the year. 10 of these women also engaged further through Ruhama's in-depth casework service.

The Ruhama Street Outreach programme uses a purposely adapted vehicle, providing a safe place for women to get information about Ruhama services as well as many other services and agencies.

The issues women in on street prostitution present with vary but there are some commonly presenting issues (though not all women experience all of these): addiction, debt, homelessness/risk of homelessness, supporting a partner financially through prostitution, poor health, suicidal ideation, experiences of serious violence (emotional, physical and sexual-often directly in the context of their prostitution).

The outreach service meets women whose needs and circumstance can vary from night to night. We support women where they are at in that particular point in time. This can range from women feeling motivated towards change, to women in immediate crisis, to those just needing a listening ear or not wanting to engage past getting a hot drink, something to eat and a temporary respite from the streets.

We provide a range of practical supports from providing personal alarms and information to maximise personal safety, as well as support in reporting a crime to the Gardai. Staff provide appropriate interventions to assist women presenting as suicidal when they engage. The outreach team also advises women of the Ruhama casework service which can help in advocating for women accessing welfare benefits, housing services and court accompaniment. Alternatively the team offer direct information/ make referrals to other specific organisations (e.g. health, violence against women and drug services) should any of these needs be identified.

Ruhama collaborates with women in street prostitution, other street outreach services and the Gardai to share information relating to dangerous offenders who are targeting women. This mechanism of reporting allows women to give information without requiring a formal complaint if they do not wish to. Reports are shared both with other women on the street to inform them of potential risks and with the Gardai to support intelligence gathering/investigations aimed at apprehending these violent and dangerous offenders.

*“The van is really important, it was much later that I felt I could make contact [with a caseworker]... they held their hand out to me for 5 years.”<sup>4</sup>*

*“Come out alone, work alone, go home alone, you are alone”,  
“I want a chance to get my life back”<sup>5</sup>*

## 2. Casework

All women who engage with Ruhama are offered our Casework Service. At the point of first contact with Ruhama, many women are in a state of distress, fear and insecurity and need a significant amount of help and support. Many speak about their vulnerability, confusion and low self-esteem. Their first contact being experienced as respectful and non-judgmental is crucial in providing them with the confidence to access further services. Ruhama delivers a person-centred care planning system designed to respond to women’s individual needs in a holistic fashion.

In 2012, there were **170 women** in Casework, of these;

- **45** were new cases in General Casework
- **18** were new cases in Victims of Trafficking (VoT) Casework.

Often these responses were out-of-hours and at the behest of An Garda Síochána. Therefore, Ruhama delivered a one to one casework service to meet the needs of **63** women for the **first time in 2012**. **107** women continued to receive dedicated support and assistance having first made contact before the start of 2012.

The casework service involves working individually with a caseworker to identify goals, pertinent issues and address the woman’s needs in a planned way. Ruhama’s casework can be for a short length of time but generally speaking, a full care plan will take between 2 and 2.5 years to complete. However, some more complex cases, particularly victims of trafficking cases have taken longer to complete. Initially, emotional support and help coping with recent trauma is vitally important, particularly in many cases where women have no other support networks available to them.

*“For me getting the support with my legal case was very important. Having someone with me at the Garda interviews, I have no family or friends,.. it made it much easier for me”.<sup>6</sup>*

*“It was important to have someone who understood my situation; they had the time...They gave me my self-confidence back; I had no confidence; ... The most important thing for me was getting all my worries off my mind, they really helped me to be less scared.”<sup>7</sup>*

**Counselling:** Emotional support is a critical component of the service offered by caseworkers. However if women identify that they would also benefit from formal therapeutic assistance, Ruhama offers psychotherapy and art therapy to women at no charge.

*“Yeah the counselling really helped too. I did the counselling for about six months and then later I did another six weeks, and then I felt I was okay.”<sup>8</sup>*

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, No 5

<sup>5</sup> Quotes from two women engaging with Outreach workers in the van 2012.

<sup>6</sup>, Independent review of Ruhama Services by Dr Jane Pillinger, Interviewee No 1

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, No 2



## 3. Education, Development and seeking work

A cornerstone of service delivery in Ruhama is Development and Education. This is a tailor-made service for each woman and is as individual as the woman herself. The main objective of engaging in Development and Education is that women will identify and move forward with certain career and educational goals, which they have identified by the woman herself commonly via a combination of her individual care plan and an in-depth assessment with her career guidance counsellor.

In 2012, **88 Women engaged with Education and Development** - an increase of **14% from 2011**.

### *In-House Programmes Offered by Ruhama in 2012*

#### One to One Supports

- English
- Math
- Literacy
- Computers
- Study Support
- Career Guidance
- C.V. design and development

#### Group Classes

- Shaping Your Future
- STEPS (Steps to Excellence for Personal Success)
- Computers (FETAC Accredited)
- Sexual Health (IFPA)
- Communications
- Art
- Sewing
- Parenting
- Jewellery Making
- Pottery
- Positive Body Image

*"I was really helped with courses, I got lots of help and advice...and they helped to pay my fees...It really helped to prepare me for work, I got onto a CE scheme"<sup>9</sup>*

## New courses in 2012

- *Mother and Toddler programme: Adequate childcare provision can be a considerable barrier for women engaging in education and development programmes, particularly for women in the asylum process who have extremely restricted access to finances and may have a limited or no support network in Ireland. With limited funding available in Ruhama to support women's childcare needs we developed a "Mother and Toddler Programme" which was heavily supported by our volunteers. The aim of the programme was to give women the opportunity to engage with their children in a new environment, learn new skills and meet other mothers. Some of the sessions delivered were baby yoga, baby massage, music, arts and crafts.*
- *Shaping your future: A further development in our education and development programme was the running of a pilot programme called "Shaping Your Future" which was adapted from One Family. The course supports personal development, career planning and job-seeking skills and preparation. This pilot was very successful and will be a core component of the development programme in 2013.*

- 88 Women engaged with Education & Development in 2012
- 47 Women developed a career path plan
- 33 Women had one to one tuition
- 10 Women availed of one to one Study Skills
- 9 Women did IT Training
- 11 Women commenced third level/FETAC accredited courses
- 7 Women successfully completed FETAC accredited courses in 2012

- 33 Women engaged in group classes
- 20 Women engaged in external group classes
- 50 Women did/developed their Curriculum Vitae
- 22 Women learned English as a second language
- 52 Women were assisted in applying for third level/further education or training
- 45 Women were financially supported to access education

*"[the worker] helped me get into an access course at DIT...I wouldn't have ever had at that time the confidence or belief in myself that I could even fill out an application form or that anyone would even entertain me, I would never have applied. She just believed in me and it takes just someone to believe in you."<sup>10</sup>*

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, no 2

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, no 8

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, no 5

## Responding to women's needs.

There was an increase of 14% of women accessing our Education and Development programmes in 2012. The increase in women accessing support reflects what Ruhama is hearing from women in terms of the educational and developmental barriers that can constrain them from moving forward and out of prostitution or recover from a trafficking situation.

- Through the education and development service Ruhama increased the number of career guidance counsellors and career guidance contact hours for women. Each woman who requested this service got one to one advice on career path planning and was supported in applying for educational/vocational courses if desired. The number of women who developed their own career path plan during 2012 was 47. Translation was made available where required.
- Women were offered in depth care planning so that they could focus on steps/actions that would ultimately lead to their overall goal of leaving prostitution
- Ruhama offered free one to one flexible English classes to women. These classes are available at times that are more suitable for women actively involved in prostitution. The classes offered can also be tailor made for the woman's requirements, i.e., if she is going 'on tour' then she can be given assignments to take with her to be reviewed on her return to Dublin.
- A majority of women involved in street prostitution who accessed Ruhama services via the Outreach Van in 2012 led chaotic lives due to their drug misuse. Ruhama has noted that this particular cohort of woman may not access the full services offered, particularly those available in education and development. Ruhama has proactively engaged with low threshold drugs services to ascertain what kind of interaction with education best suits the client needs, and with this in mind is developing a number of once-off workshops that women could access without having to sign up for regular classes.
- Ruhama provided bus tickets to women in extreme poverty and those in direct provision who have only an allowance of €19.10 per week to cover all expenses. This small practical assistance enables women to access classes, meetings with their caseworker and to attend other important meetings which they otherwise simply could not afford.
- The accessibility of quality and affordable childcare acts as a barrier to women's education both in Ruhama and externally. Ruhama has responded proactively by supporting access routes to community crèche facilities, giving grants towards childcare, accessing courses which provide childcare on site and delivering Ruhama courses in facilities with free childcare.
- Education grants and bursaries were made available to assist some women in accessing further development and education opportunities.

*"After I had my son I did a personal development course, which brought my self-esteem back to me. I was frightened being in another country... after doing the course I felt I was finding myself again."*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, no 1

## 4. Resettlement support (Housing and Social Welfare)

- 33 women supported with resettlement.
- 30 Women developed budgeting skills for managing their households
- 16 Women were successful in receiving benefits/entitlements
- 30 Women supported with paper work/ form completion

Resettlement is a unique and important element of Ruhama's service delivery. Ruhama has a dedicated worker who assists women to secure housing and accommodation, which suits their individual needs. Women are supported in accessing social welfare entitlements and benefits as well as negotiating the necessary paper work involved.

Each case can be complex and challenging. Some women have been in the asylum process with an allowance of only €19.10 per week for a number of years and find themselves faced with having to secure private accommodation. Other women have lost their accommodation, and in some cases, their benefits because of past chaotic drug use or other life challenges and need to renegotiate the system.

In 2012, **33** women availed of Ruhama's resettlement service.

During 2012 a constraint for women in Resettlement progressing smoothly to independent living was the fact that a number of landlords were insisting on tenants providing the following before they can secure their accommodation:

- 1. Employers reference**
- 2. Utility Bills**
- 3. 1 month deposit and 1 month rent in advance payment**

Women who achieve a Stamp 4 residency permit but have been accommodated beforehand in Direct Provision hostels or women who have been chaotic drug users and have experienced homelessness cannot get an employment reference letter or utility bills. The Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly Community Welfare Officer) generally will only give one month's deposit and will not give rent in advance. This means that service users are borrowing the money and in debt which can increase the risk of a draw back into prostitution/vulnerability to exploitation for a woman who has come through this experience already.

Ruhama strives always to advocate and empower women to overcome barriers to their independence and, on a case by case basis, put in place supports including:

Making representations successfully on behalf of a number of women to their social welfare office. Providing courses around personal effectiveness/independent living skills - included a module on money management/budget control. Encouraging women to open bank accounts or a Credit Union account to begin saving at the earliest opportunity. Forging links with a small number of private landlords who are more flexible with regard to this issue. Ruhama has also been advocating with other charitable groups as from time to time they will assist in the financial costs. Ruhama secured a small fund in 2012 to assist women when they move to independent accommodation to support the purchase of practical homeware necessities (bedding, kitchen crockery...) to ease the financial burden of moving. These funds are limited in the face of high demand for support.

*"I was given help in filling in the forms for housing and for the social, as I had not done that before. They helped me as some of the questions I didn't know how to fill in. And they did help me to get the documents and they went to the office with me to get the forms. Now I know a lot because of them. There's no way I could have done that [alone]."<sup>12</sup>*

A key milestone for women who have been trafficked or in the country undocumented and accommodated in the State's Direct Provision hostel system is the move from Direct Provision into independent rented accommodation. Gaining a temporary 6-months visa (Stamp 4) gives these women independence and provides them with more certainty in their lives. It cannot be underestimated the impact that having independent accommodation and legal status has on women's lives, survival and autonomy.

*"Getting the Stamp 4 means I can get a job and be independent. When you are in the hostel, you are just there. When you get your paper you have choices"<sup>13</sup>*

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, no 6

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, no 4

## 5. Health care

Women affected by prostitution and trafficking frequently have very poor overall health. There is a strong correlation between women's experience of being in prostitution, taken with the factors that drew them in, and a decline in self-esteem & emotional well-being. The knock on effect can be a combination of increased mental ill-health and also a neglect of physical health.<sup>14</sup>

A key component of support to women in prostitution is assistance and encouragement to look after their health and so a combination of harm reduction, sexual, mental and practical general health services are critically important for women affected by prostitution to be able to access.

Ruhama is not a direct health service provider but through our casework and care-planning with women supporting them to access healthcare to meet their needs is an important component. If desired the Ruhama caseworker provides emotional support to women at key stress periods when they are accessing health care such as accompaniment to appointments where test results are being issued.

**Ruhama caseworkers engaged with a number of health services in 2012 to access free or affordable health care for women, including:**

- The dedicated HSE Women's health Service who provide a vital holistic sexual health service to women in prostitution and trafficking victims.
- GP services within the Safetynet initiative
- Drug projects that offer clean needle exchange and other supports such as detox services.
- Mental health services including: Community Mental health teams, medical social work services and dedicated counselling services. Ruhama also offers counselling services (psychotherapy and Art therapy).
- Ruhama provides holistic therapies in-house.

Ruhama also attained a small grant to assist women in need with emergency dental care in 2012.

*"At the beginning, before I had the medical card, they took me to the clinic. [My caseworker] took me there, which I was grateful for...and also my health was helped with things like reflexology."*<sup>15</sup>

## 6. Interagency work:

A joined up approach, which is central to Ruhama's model of work, is essential in facilitating assistance to women active in prostitution, those trying to exit and survivor recovery. No one agency has all the answers and women affected by prostitution, including trafficking victims, may be in contact with a range of agencies and individuals in seeking support and assistance for a variety of needs. Forming good relations across a range of statutory and non-statutory agencies requires a considerable commitment of resources by Ruhama but it is recognised as a critically important aspect of the work to ensure clear pathways to support and to avoid duplications and gaps in both service provision.

Ruhama also recognises the value of collaboration and interagency engagement at a policy level. The organisation is an active member of The National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women, and also at the Anti Human Trafficking Unit's multi-agency forums alongside other key NGO's and statutory stakeholders. The organisation is also represented at a number of other key forums at a national and international level as outlined in the Awareness raising, Advocacy and Campaigning section.

<sup>14</sup> The Next Step Initiative, Ruhama, 2005 - Chapter 7 Damage and Survival Mechanisms

<sup>15</sup> Independent Review of Ruhama Services Interviewee No 8

In addition to work at this policy level and in order to deliver better and accessible services in 2012, Ruhama worked with many other agencies and services including:

- Gardai across the country and in particular the Garda National Immigration Bureau, the “Quest” team and National Bureau of Criminal Investigation
- The HSE Women’s Health Service and Anti Human Trafficking Team
- Dochas Women’s Centre interdisciplinary Team
- Drug projects/Addiction services
- Domestic violence refuges and support services;
- Sexual violence services
- Educational institutions;
- Social justice organisations;
- Men’s organisations;
- Migrant, refugee and asylum support organisations;
- Independent law centres
- Counselling services;
- Statutory agencies;
- Embassies
- Suicide support and prevention organisations;
- Residential care services for minors
- Overseas support services

Ruhama would like to thank all of those services and agencies with whom we collaborated with in 2012 to achieve best possible outcomes for women and we look forward to a continuing fruitful working relationship into the future.

## 7. Pathways away from service provision: moving on

A critical element of Ruhama’s model of work is to support women to independence, and that of course means reaching a point on a woman’s journey when we part ways. This is when women that have been receiving support within casework have decided, along with their caseworker that they no longer need to utilise the services and support of Ruhama. This is a very positive step and an extremely successful milestone for both the women and Ruhama, where women are looking forwards and actively progressing their own self-identified life goals.

Initially, when a care plan is devised and developed within casework, the woman outlines what goals she has and what she believes her needs are across a range of areas including health, legal issues, accommodation, education etc. As supports are put in place and the women start to realise their goals, their strength and confidence increase.

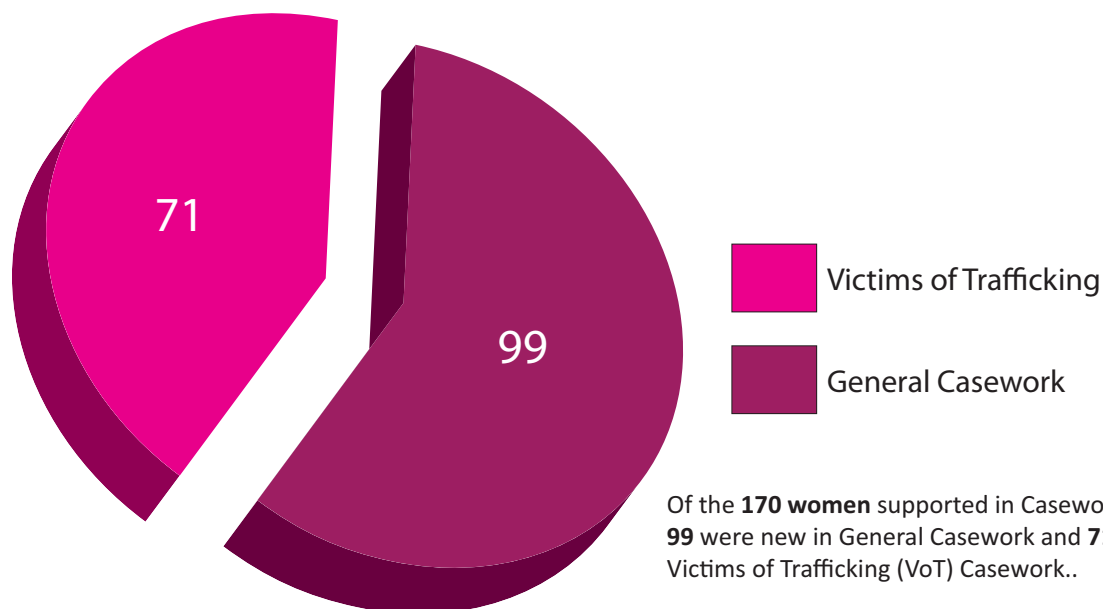
In 2012 in the course of the year 49 cases were closed.

Every month as new faces come through Ruhama’s doors, there are familiar ones saying goodbye, and we would like to take this opportunity to wish these amazing women all the best in their future endeavours.

*“At the beginning I was in lots of contact with Ruhama. I needed a lot of help and support. They helped me with money in the early days and they supported me with the transport to get to Dublin to attend my course. Now I tend to phone them if I need any advice.”<sup>16</sup>*

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, No 6

**Chart 1** Breakdown of ALL Casework into General Casework & *Victims of Trafficking Casework (170 Women)*



**Type of Contact with Women in Casework (170 Women)**

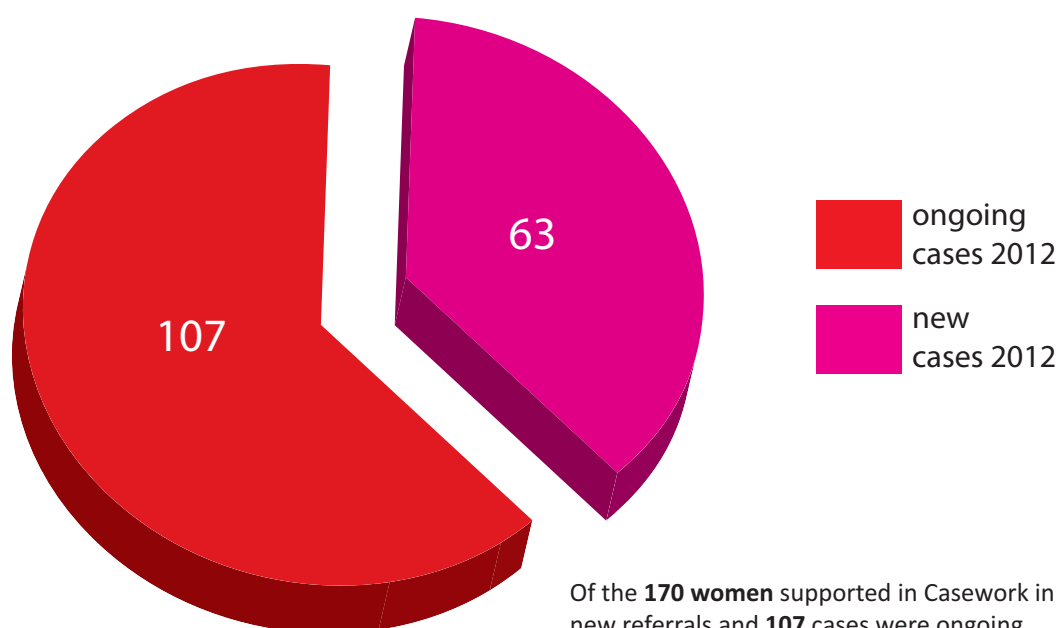
- 908 Face to Face
- 13,711 Verbal Telephone\*
- 5,226 SMS Supports\*

\*Contacts directly with or advocating on behalf of women

**241 Accompaniments in 2012**

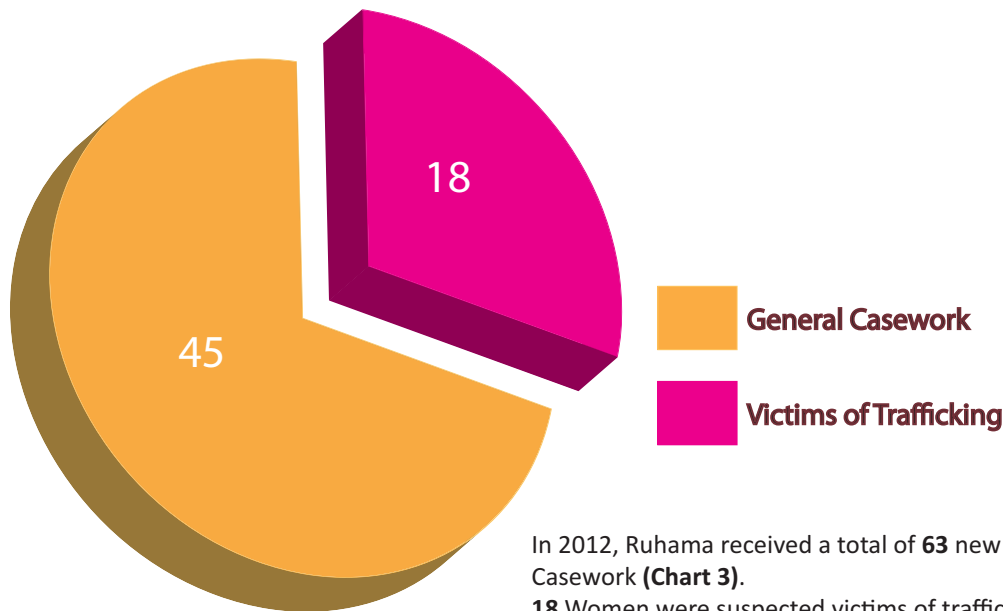
- 95 Legal (Statement taking process, court, meetings with legal team)
  - 57 Medical
  - 31 Case Meetings
  - 58 Housing/Welfare

**Chart 2** Breakdown of ALL Casework into New and Ongoing cases (**170 Women**)



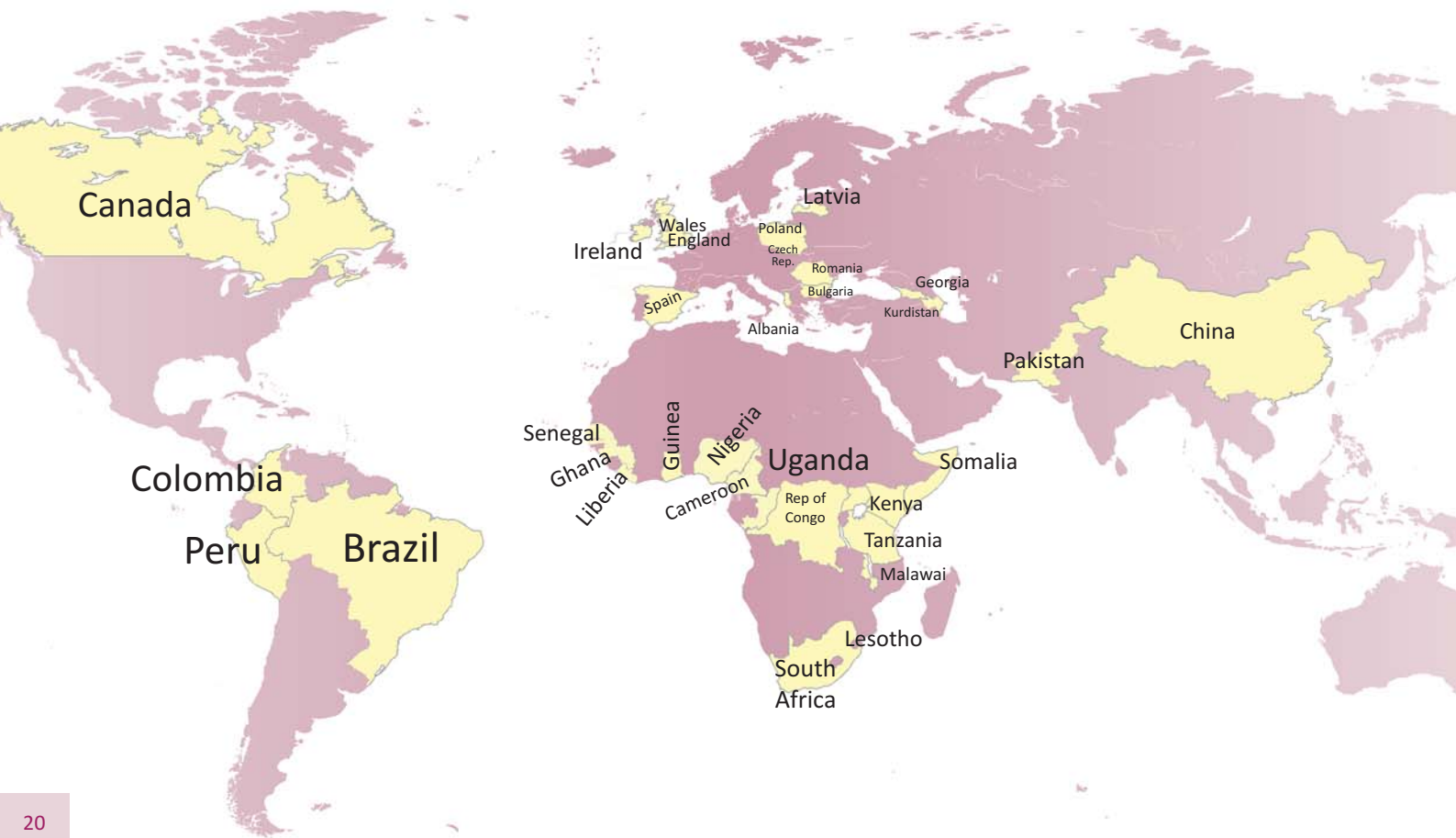


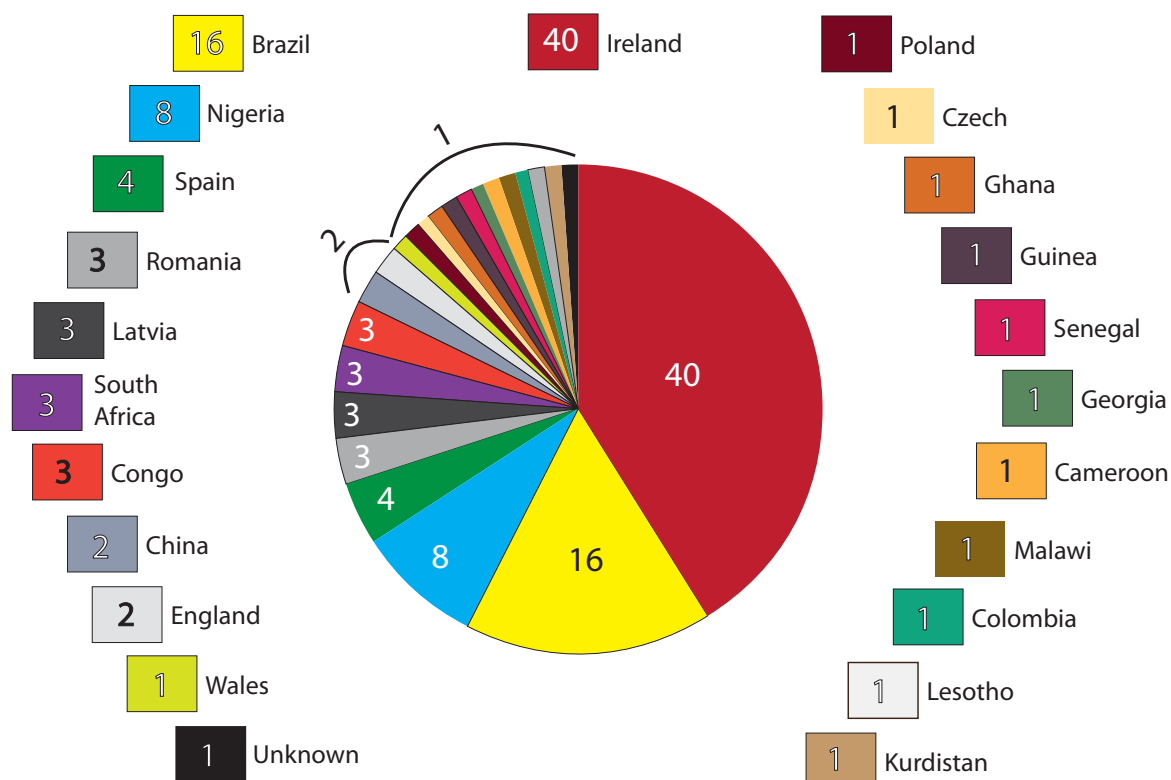
**Chart 3** Breakdown of NEW Referrals to Casework into General Casework and Victims of Trafficking (VoT) Casework (**63 women**)



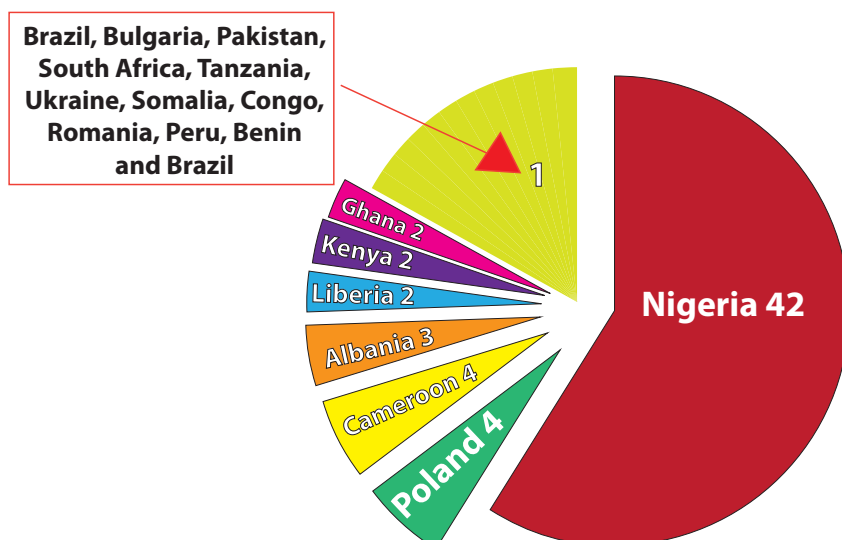
In 2012, Ruhama received a total of **63** new referrals to ALL Casework (**Chart 3**).  
**18** Women were suspected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and were supported in Victims of Trafficking Casework **45** Women were affected by prostitution and were supported in General Casework.

**Countries Of Origin** The **170** women supported in **ALL Casework** during 2012 came from **32 different countries**



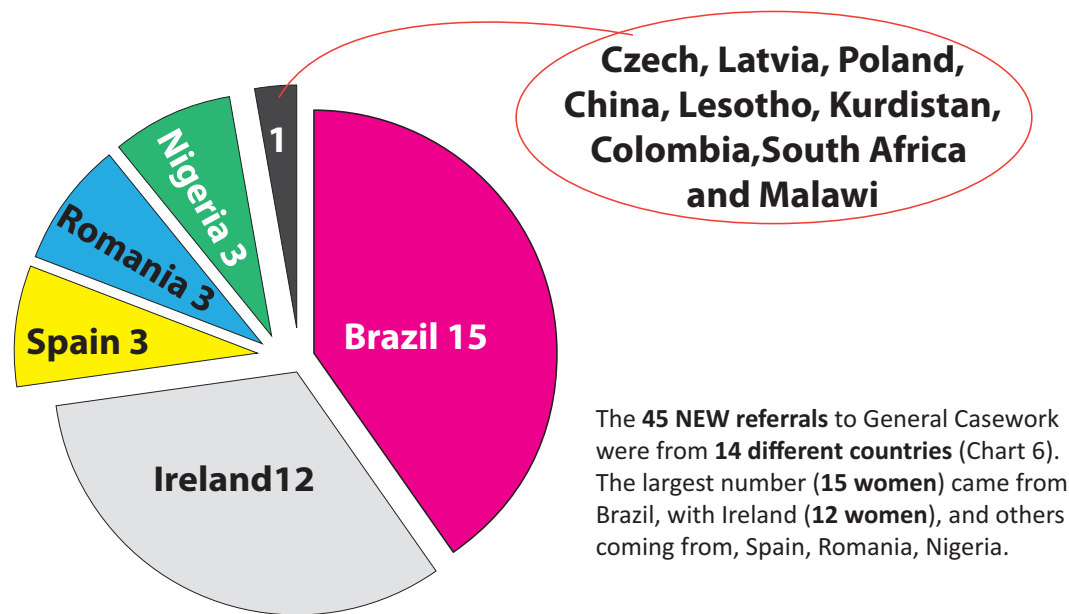
**Chart 4 Countries of Origin – Women in General Casework (99 Women)**

The 99 Women supported in General Casework came from 22 different countries (Chart IVI). The majority came from Ireland (40 women), with Brazil, Nigeria and Spain as the next highest representation.

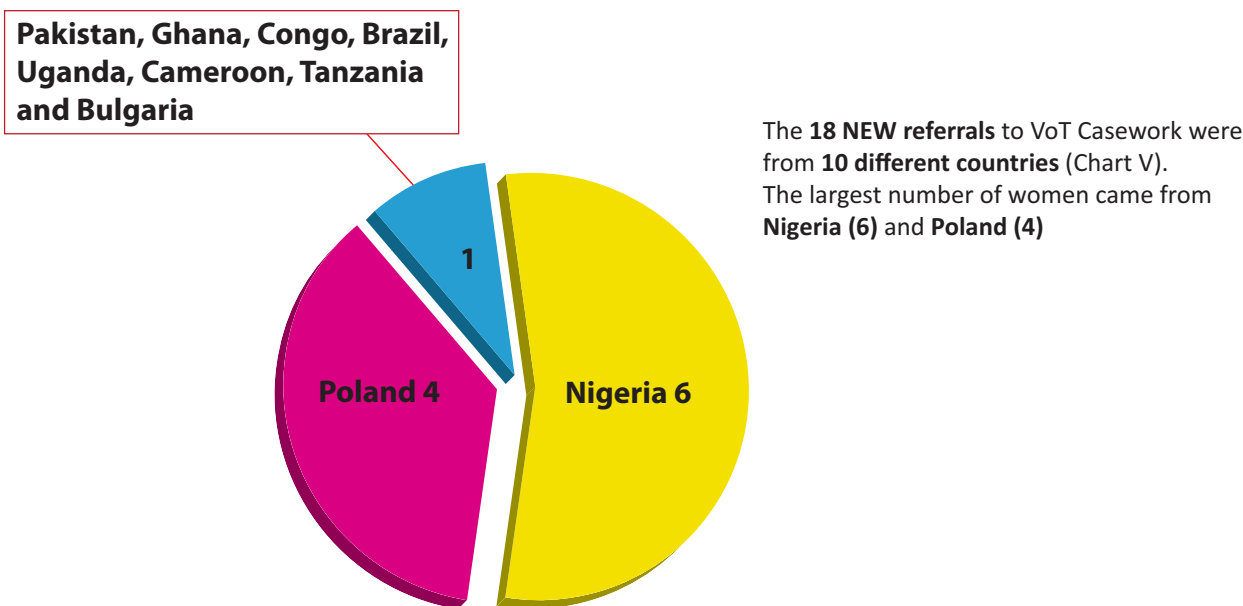
**Chart 5 Countries of Origin of NEW Referrals of women in Victims of Trafficking (VoT) Casework**

The 71 Women in VoT Casework came from 19 different countries (Chart 5). The Majority came from Nigeria (42 women), with Poland, Cameroon, and Albania as the next highest representation.

**Chart 6** Countries of Origin of NEW Referrals of women in General Casework (45 Women)



**Chart 7** Countries of Origin of NEW Referrals of women in Victims of Trafficking (VoT) Casework



# Advocacy, Campaigning and Awareness-Raising

## Advocacy, Campaigning and Awareness-Raising

Ruhama is committed to raising awareness on issues surrounding prostitution, sex trafficking and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation in Ireland. Our direct work with women affected by prostitution, gives us a significant insight into this complex social issue.

Ruhama opposes the regulation of the organisation of the sex trade, seeing prostitution in the context of sexual exploitation and as a human rights issue. Ruhama supports a legislative framework that would decriminalise those in prostitution as vulnerable persons, but criminalise activities related to organising prostitution and fuelling demand. To bring about necessary changes to legislation and government policies, we network with state agencies, civil society groups and non-governmental organisations. We contribute to national media and other relevant publications.

### Awareness Raising, Advocacy & Campaign work is achieved by:

- Highlighting the demand in the sex trade, calling on the criminalisation of the purchase of sexual services with the decriminalizing of those prostituted.
- Addressing the widespread stereotyping and blaming of women and the stigma attached which isolates women and limits their opportunities to progress.
- Raising awareness of the harm caused by prostitution, to those in prostitution and to society as a whole by stimulating discussion and debate among the wider public.
- Delivery of Training and awareness sessions to groups on the issue of prostitution and trafficking.
- Publishing submissions and reports highlighting the experiences of women affected by prostitution and trafficking.
- Engaging with domestic and international networks and organisations to co-ordinate activities and advocate for policy positions at international levels that recognise the harm of prostitution and target demand.

## Multimedia Campaign

*'Women sell sex because they have to, not because they want to'*



*The actress, Susan Loughnane of Love/Hate (RTE drama), gave her support to the launch of the campaign.  
L to R Susan Loughnane (Actress) and Sarah Benson (CEO, Ruhama)*

A national multimedia campaign was launched by Ruhama in 2012. The campaign consisted of a radio ad and poster. The aim of the campaign was to create discussion and confront society with the reality for women in the sex trade.

# Multimedia Campaign - Continued

The image for the poster was stark and explicit depicting the reductive nature of the sex trade. A silhouette was chosen to encompass women of any age, ethnicity and nationality but whose worth in prostitution is placed solely on the commercialisation of their bodies for sex.

The radio advertisement accompanying the poster campaign reinforced the message that prostitution is never considered a career option for women and no one would choose it for someone they cared about.

The campaign reached a broad cross section of society, with posters advertised on Dublin Bus and the radio ad was broadcast on national and local radio stations. The campaign featured extensively in the media and created discussion on social media.



*The radio ad won bronze in the Love Radio Awards 2012*

## Turn Off the Red Light Campaign

As core group members of the Turn Off the Red Light campaign, Ruhama was busy taking part in several political briefings with other TORL partners and was actively involved in raising awareness of the aims of the campaign with organisations and the general public. The Government's launch of a consultation process on the future direction of prostitution legislation in Ireland was seen as a landmark achievement in opening up a wide-ranging discussion on the issue of prostitution in Ireland and moved a step closer to achieving the campaign objectives.



## Submissions

### The Government Consultation Process

As part of the Government's consultation process on the future direction of prostitution legislation in Ireland, Ruhama addressed a conference organised by the Department of Justice and sent a written submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality and Defence. Over 800 submissions were received by the Oireachtas and Ruhama was one of the organisations invited to present its submission at the Joint Oireachtas Committee's hearings on prostitution legislation.

Ruhama's submission responded to some of the questions/issues highlighted in the Department of Justice's discussion document and outlined a range of legal recommendations, which would update the law and address the current reality of prostitution in Ireland.

**Key recommendations in Ruhama's submission to the Oireachtas Committee included:**

- The criminalisation of the purchase of sex, while amending sections of the law to decriminalise those who are in prostitution.
- An outline of amendments which would update existing prostitution legislation and address the changing modus operandi of criminals involved in organised prostitution, particularly addressing the role of telecommunications in the advertising of prostitution.
- To compliment legislation, there needs to be practical health and support services to women affected by prostitution. These services need to be sustained and enhanced.

**Ruhama Pre-Budget Submission (Budget 2013)**

Ruhama published a Pre-Budget Submission, recommending the Government gender and poverty proof all measures contained in Budget 2013. Our submission highlighted poverty as a serious 'push' factor for women becoming vulnerable to prostitution and sex trafficking. We recommended a range of measures which would reduce this risk and called for adequate resources to be allocated for a holistic range of services to women involved in prostitution, covering a wide spectrum, from harm reduction to exiting.

We highlighted the Habitual Residency Condition as a barrier for women accessing services and advocated for its exemption for women wishing to exit prostitution.

The submission was launched to the national and local media and was the basis for our advocacy and lobbying work with politicians.

**Media**

Ruhama regularly participates in media interviews and uses social media to highlight and raise awareness of the issue of prostitution.

Number of interviews broadcast/published in 2012

	Print	TV	Radio	Online
No. of Interviews broadcast/published 2012	42	8	41	11

Ruhama publishes a newsletter every quarter, giving readers updates about the work of Ruhama, forthcoming events and relevant policy issues. Individuals can subscribe directly to the newsletter and it is also published on our website and social media.

Ruhama continues to enhance its communications with interactive media via Facebook and Twitter. At the end of 2012, Ruhama had 2,231 followers on Facebook and 1,347 on Twitter.

**Multi-agency Collaboration and External Representation**

Ruhama works in partnership with other key voluntary and statutory bodies both at a national and international level to tackle the issue of prostitution and sex trafficking. Staff represent Ruhama on a range of forums contributing to the development of policies and best practice approaches which ensure that women affected by prostitution and victims of sex trafficking are given the best possible intervention.

**Ruhama is represented at/member of a number of forums including:**

- Anti Human Trafficking Unit interdisciplinary groups for: National Referral Mechanism; Awareness raising and the Roundtable group on Human trafficking (Dept of Justice)
- South Inner City Local Drugs Task Force Care & Case management committee
- National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women (Dept. of Justice)
- Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women
- Women's Human Rights Alliance
- National Women's Council of Ireland
- PICUM



# Multi-agency Collaboration and External Representation

**Ruhama met with and shared information with a large number of international bodies in 2012 including:**

- US State Department – TIP Report
- GRETA – the Council of Europe monitoring body on human trafficking.
- Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR/CTHB) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- Chairperson of the FEMM Women’s Committee
- The DG Home of the EU, Mr Stefano Manservis
- UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, Ms Margaret Sekaggya
- US Federal Police.
- European Women’s Lobby
- The DG HOME study on Council Directive 2004/81/EC
- NGOs and statutory groups working on trafficking and prostitution in other countries

## Training and Awareness Raising

Ruhama provides information and training to individuals and groups, to heighten awareness and improve the overall delivery of services to women affected by prostitution.

### *Professional training with law enforcement*

Ruhama is one of the NGO’s providing input at the Anti Trafficking in-service training organised by An Garda Siochana. This training is delivered twice a year in the Garda Training College to members of An Garda Siochana and the PSNI.

In 2011, in partnership with An Garda Siochana, Ruhama developed a pilot training course for law enforcement members on the issue of policing prostitution. Following the success of this pilot course, it has been endorsed by An Garda Siochana and is rolled out twice a year to members of the Gardai and PSNI. The training aims to help participants explore their attitudes towards prostitution, gain greater understanding and sensitivity about the issues experienced by those in prostitution, and develop practical skills in policing organised prostitution.

This training is delivered as a collaboration between Ruhama trainers, Garda officers specialised in policing organised prostitution and an experienced anti-trafficking consultant.



*Training to law enforcement personnel*

## Students

Each year, we receive a large number of requests for information from second and third level students. We recognise the importance of raising awareness with young people and are committed to supporting the education of a future generation who may choose careers which will directly or indirectly work on the issues surrounding prostitution and sex trafficking.

We are encouraged by the level of interest shown by students and teachers, with some secondary students choosing the topic of sex trafficking and prostitution for their projects in state exams or entry into awards, such as the Young Social Innovators.



*Gerardine Rowley, Ruhama with students and their teacher at Our Lady's Bower, Athlone. The students chose the issue of prostitution their Junior Cert CSPE course*



*'Hidden Faces/Hidden Places' was a YSI project by TY students at St. Mary's Secondary School, New Ross. They raised awareness and lobbied for legislation to address sex trafficking. Ruhama supported the project.*

# Training

## Other training and awareness delivered to a wide range of groups/events including:

- The Men's Development Network
- The Department of Justice conference on prostitution.
- Tirzah conference on sex trafficking.
- South African Embassy - International Women's Day
- Human Trafficking conference - Doras Luimni
- Trafficking seminar - Edmund Rice Centre, Waterford

### Research support to TV and Theatre productions

Ruhama gave research support to producers and actors of TV and theatre, including; RTE's Love/Hate drama, the play 'Marie-Clare' and Smashing Times theatre company. Ruhama also contributed to two investigative documentaries into the Irish sex trade; 'Profiting from Prostitution' by RTE's Prime Time and 'Ireland's Vice Girls' by TV3's Paul Connolly Investigates.

One particular highlight in 2012 was a collaborative piece of work with the Abbey theatre which developed a theatrical exploration of prostitution and trafficking in Ireland. One of Ruhama's case workers and some service users fed into the development of this project, with one service user taking part in the performance. 'Taking Back Our Voices' was developed from personal and honest relationships between the actors and survivors of prostitution and trafficking which were formed over a number of months. The project was commissioned by the Abbey Theatre's Community and Education Department.

## Photo Gallery



***Sarah Benson at South Africa Embassy International Women's Day event***



***Ruhama stand at Garda Conference***

## Volunteers

Our volunteer team continues to be one of Ruhama's most valuable resources in the provision of a quality frontline service to women affected by prostitution. At the core of Ruhama's ethos and practice is the support of each woman's individual set of needs and goals. However on a practical level, meeting these needs when faced with ever decreasing core funding and an increasing demand, is a formidable challenge. In 2012, 52 volunteers contributed over 1257 hours and brought a wealth of professional skills, flexibility and diversity to our frontline services. They complimented the work of our staff in providing a truly holistic support service that catered to women's needs.

In reality, we could not provide key services such as counselling, one to one classes, befriending and our street outreach programme, which would be reduced by as much as 70%, without the contribution of our volunteer team.

### Volunteers support the delivery of services in following area's

- Outreach
- One to one English/Computer Classes/Study Support
- Counselling
- Delivering personal development courses
- Holistic therapies
- Guidance Counselling
- Awareness Raising
- Befriending
- Parenting Support
- Drama, Music, Sewing and Art
- Administration/It Support

Volunteering not only bolsters existing services but it is a source of innovation, creativity and energy for new ideas and approaches.

In Ruhama we endeavour to not only provide the best experience to the women we work with but also to the volunteers who give up their time and offer their skills to Ruhama. Our Volunteer Manager works closely with Volunteer Ireland to ensure we are meeting the highest standards of best practice in supporting and fostering the role of volunteers. To support their volunteer work we offer training, one to one support, team meetings as well as organising social spaces that the team can get to know their colleagues - we believe volunteering should also be a positive enjoyable experience!

We would like to thank all of our volunteers who contributed so generously to the work of Ruhama in 2012 from our frontline volunteers, to our "behind the scenes" supporters, to our hardworking board members!

# Financial Summary

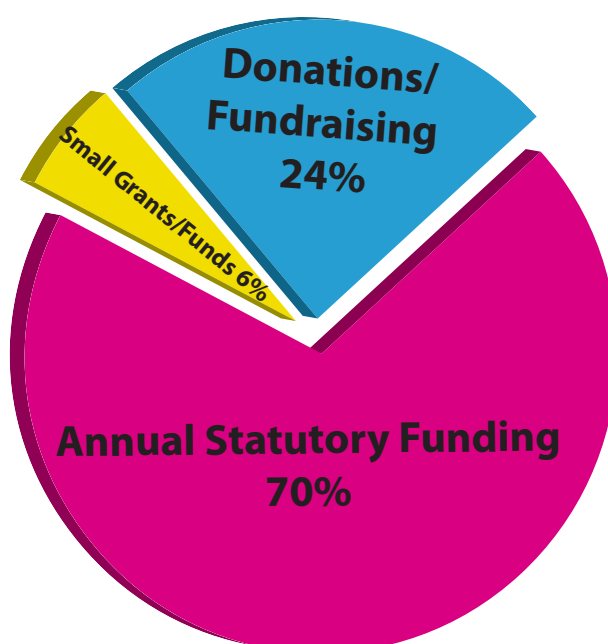
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2012

Ruhama. A company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2012

	2012 €	2011 €
<b>Annual Statutory Funding</b>		
Anti Human Trafficking Unit Dept of Justice & Equality	195,000	225,000
HSE	122,500	129,560
SICLDTF	49,876	50,636
SICLDTF EMERGING NEEDS	50,948	51,724
<b>Other Small Grant Income</b>	<b>37,551</b>	<b>43,960</b>
<b>Donations/Fundraising</b>	<b>146,409</b>	<b>116,796</b>
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>602,284</b>	<b>617,676</b>
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>(599,560)</b>	<b>(613,275)</b>
Operating surplus/(Deficit)	2,724	4,401
<b>Other income and expenses</b>		
Interest receivable	60	40
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<b>2,784</b>	<b>4,441</b>

### Income



## Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2012

	2012 €	2011 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible Assets	1,063	3,936
Debtors	16,744	17,748
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>284,991</u>	<u>260,100</u>
	301,735	277,848
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>(136,067)</b>	<b>(117,837)</b>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>165,668</b>	<b>160,011</b>
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	<b><u>166,731</u></b>	<b><u>163,947</u></b>
<b>Capital and Reserves</b>		
Income and Expenditure Accounts	166,731	126,947
Deferred Reserves	<u>0</u>	<u>37,000</u>
Funds	166,731	163,947



# Financial Summary - Continued

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 14th May 2013 and signed on its behalf by:

Catherine Joyce  
Director

Zuilmah Wallis  
Director

## Independent Auditors' Report to the members of Ruhama

In our opinion the financial statements:

Give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the company's affairs as at 31st December 2012 and of its surplus for the year then ended: and have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2009.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit. In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the company. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

Signed by: Liam McQuaid  
Duignan Carthy O'Neill  
Chartered Accountants  
30th May 2013

## Financial supporters

Ruhama has a lengthy, positive and productive history with its statutory funders and values the continuing relationship with them – particularly in the current challenging economic climate.

The organisation has, in response to reductions in statutory funding over the last three years affected rigorous cost saving initiatives to try to maximize frontline service provision while making savings on outgoings. Ruhama operates in a highly streamlined fashion and as our shortfall between our statutory funding and our outgoings will remain for the foreseeable future we must continue to actively protect our service through application for small grants and of course fundraising.

We would like to pay tribute to all our generous donors and fundraising supporters. There are individuals and organisations that have been stalwart in their contribution to Ruhama's success, in some cases over many years. Our donors and supporters range (to name a few) from corporate bodies, international funders, community foundations, women's groups, artists of music, literature and theatre, religious congregations, and individuals who have held events and raised sponsorship. Every euro raised, granted or donated is hugely appreciated and we hope that this warm support will continue into the future when it will be more important than ever.

*To explore the many ways in which you can support Ruhama, including making a donation, please visit our website [www.ruhama.ie](http://www.ruhama.ie) and click the "SUPPORT RUHAMA" button on the home page, (if reading this in soft copy you can click on this link to access the "SUPPORT RUHAMA" page directly: <http://www.ruhama.ie/page.php?intPageID=235>) or phone Roisin on 01 8360292.*

**Ruhama is fully committed to achieving the standards contained within the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.**



**RUHAMA**

Supporting Women Affected by Prostitution

**[www.Ruhama.ie](http://www.Ruhama.ie)**



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